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# THE EGYPTIAN QUESTION 1882 - 1951

*SIXTY NINE YEARS OF BRITISH OCCUPATION  
OF EGYPT AND THE SUDAN*



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*"Give me liberty or give me death"*

-- Patrick Henry

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# SIXTY NINE YEARS OF OCCUPATION BY BRITISH

*In our time, there is no man in the world who can afford to ignore the struggle of any people for genuine unconditional freedom. The world has learned the hard way that a threat to liberty, regardless of where it exists, implies a definite danger to global peace.*

*That is why the man in Wichita, Kansas, is directly concerned in what takes place in Egypt or any other remote area of the globe.*

*That is why the Anglo-Egyptian dispute, climaxing sixty-nine years of fighting, arguing, talking and bargaining, is now important to you.*

**E**GYPT TODAY demands its complete freedom and independence.

She demands it on the basis of justice.

She demands it as her right as a sovereign state.

She demands it in the name of her people.

She demands it, not alone for Egypt, but for the Sudan, for the millions of people of the same blood, the same religion, the same interests, who inhabit the Valley of the Nile.

She demands it for the sake of peace and security in the strategic middle East.

*Egypt as a law-abiding nation wants to cooperate fully, but with full sovereignty, with all the other countries of the free world.*



British troops remain on Egyptian soil, as they have done for the last 69 years. Egypt wants them removed. She contends that it is not possible to conclude a fair treaty or alliance with the West, as long as they remain.

How did Britain come by a place in this picture?

The long and sordid story can be understood only if one can lift himself out of current live-and-let-live ideas, and resurrect the devious assumptions of nineteenth-century Imperialism.

In the '70s and '80s of the last century, under the reign of Khedive Ismail, Egypt's finances reached a low ebb. In that day, however, the moral outlook did not condemn the use of force to collect an international debt. And that is what happened.

First came interference in Egypt's internal affairs by the British and the French. Theirs



was the high mission of protecting the foreign bondholders.

Later, on various pretexts, the British bombarded Alexandria in 1882. They followed through by occupying the whole of Egypt.

British statesmen disavowed any intention to hold Egypt permanently. They declared time and time again that the occupation was but "temporary."

Sixty-nine long years have passed—and the "temporary" presence of British forces still continues.

British occupation is in contradiction to the principle of the UNO Charter that troops of one member country shall not be permitted to remain in the territory of another member in time of peace. Egyptians look upon continued occupation as an unwarranted infringement upon the sovereignty of their supposedly free and independent nation.

The people of Egypt further resent the internal confusion and constant friction which result from foreign occupation. For many years, as the world knows, British officials enjoyed a privileged position in Cairo. Time and again, they interfered in the purely domestic affairs of Egypt. Backed by military power, they were able to bring pressure to bear whenever they saw fit.

Such a state of affairs could not hope to bring either freedom or contentment to Egypt. Her people have seen their national progress retarded, their plans for social reform forestalled, and the development of their own defenses

either delayed, or prevented altogether.

The world cannot live half free. If the Egyptians and all Arab and Islamic nations are to contribute to the cause of peace and freedom Egypt must naturally gain first its own freedom.



In the Anglo-Egyptian dispute, there are at stake those principles upon which the Allies fought their war against Fascism and Nazism, and for which they have committed themselves to fight anywhere: equality between large and small nations, and the right of every nation, whatever its size or strength, to enjoy its full freedom, unfettered by imperialistic design or ambition of others.



Five thousand years ago, Egypt lit the torch of civilization for the world. The crowded centuries have taught her many lessons in patience and understanding of the problems of humanity.

Throughout the second World War Egypt lined up with the Allies postponing any discussions of its relations with Britain until complete victory was won. Since then she has been negotiating with Britain to no avail.

*Now this key Middle East nation has reached a new turning point in its history. The attainment of her complete liberty and independence can no longer be postponed.*

## II

# BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN THE VALLEY OF THE NILE

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After the British occupation occurred in 1882 a religious revolt spread across part of Egypt. This gave Britain an opportunity to extend her grip far south along the Nile River and deep into Africa.

It required 17 years of joint Anglo-Egyptian operations to put down the rebellion.

During the long campaign, Britain professed to be a friend and ally of occupied Egypt, with no ulterior motive of her own.

But in London, once the campaign had ended, British statesmen were not slow to recognize a major political opportunity. With the northern part of the Nile Valley (Egypt) under British control, why not also the southern part (the Sudan)? Both parts depended for their existence on the life-giving Nile River. Whoever controlled the waters of the Upper Nile obviously could, if they so willed, control Egypt.

*The dependency of Egypt on the Nile has not lessened in 5,000 years. The intensive agricultural production so vital to Egypt relies on an intricate system of irrigation, perfected through centuries of effort. The system is based entirely on a well-regulated flow of Nile water. Should the course of the Nile be diverted or damage occur*

*to the dams and reservoirs built by the Egyptians along the 4,100 mile long river, Egypt would be drought-ridden or ravaged by floods. The Nile flows through Sudanese territory for more than 2,100 miles, from the heart of Africa to the present southern Egyptian border.*

Great Britain knew the strategic value of her entrenchment along the Upper Nile. As soon as she had succeeded in occupying the Sudan as well as Egypt, her next problem was to try to legalize this occupation and at the same time attempt to convince the Egyptian and Sudanese peoples that she was in the Nile Valley in the role of protector. She devised, and compelled Egypt to accept, two documents which became known as the 1899 Agreements. These so-called Agreements provided for a joint Anglo-Egyptian administration in the Sudan. At the same time, the British tried to effect a physical separation of the Sudan from Egypt by fixing the Egyptian southern frontier along the 22nd parallel. In her occupied state, Egypt was in no position to reject the British terms or debate the legality of the Agreements.

The fate of the whole Nile Valley was, indeed, in British hands.



Egypt waited until after the Armistice of 1918 to make her first official bid for complete independence. All these years Egypt was a British protectorate with, of course, only a minor participation in the administration of the Sudan.

In his book, "Egypt," published in London in 1927, the famous British author, George Young, states: "When the Armistice came it found Egypt prepared by counsel with a strong case for independence, built upon the principles of peace as laid down by President Wilson and on the promises made by ourselves to neighboring nations, whose war services and stage of civilization gave them less claim to our consideration than had Egypt. No sooner was the Armistice signed than Saad Zaghloul Pasha, at the head of a deputation representative of all (Egyptian) points of view, asked the (British) High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, for leave to submit Egypt's case in London. This request, although recommended by the High Commissioner, was

curtly rejected by the Foreign Office, Zaghloul's reply was carefully reasoned and quite reasonable; and reconsideration of the refusal was urged by Wingate, whose exceptional experience in Egypt showed him the mistake that was being made. But this too, was refused."

The refusal of the British Foreign Office then even to listen to Egypt's case for independence did insult and infuriate the Egyptian people. Unrest spread rapidly throughout the country and the Egyptian Cabinet collapsed a few days after formation. Discontent grew to outbreaks of violence and Britain found herself faced with a revolution.

A much delayed note, in 1921, invited the Egyptians to appoint a delegation whose duty it would be to recommend a substitute for the existing British protectorate over Egypt. The British insisted that any new arrangement must insure the special interests of Great Britain.

### III

# BRITISH ATTITUDE UNCHANGING

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The attitude of the British continued unyielding. In this latest British offer of 1921, no mention was made of the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt. No mention was made of the historical unity between Egypt and the Sudan.

Egyptians could not accept such an offer. A storm of protest swept the country. Once again, Zaghloul Pasha—who now had gained the stature of a national hero—and other leaders, including el-Nahas Pasha the present Premier of Egypt, were arrested and exiled.

Only when conditions in Egypt reached a dangerously explosive state did Britain finally consent to move decisively in recognition of Egypt's claim. Lord Allenby hastened from London to Cairo with a Declaration released on February 28, 1922, which, according to the British, made Egypt "an independent sovereign state." The British clearly stated their position in the Declaration which said that "certain matters were absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government until such time as it may be possible, by free discussion and friendly accommodation on both sides, to conclude agreements in regard thereto between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Egypt."

*These restrictive clauses were tantamount to Britain retaining the right to interfere, at any time, in Egypt's internal affairs. Britain first used that so-called right in ordering deletion from the new Egyptian constitution, of the phrase "King of Egypt and the Sudan," allowing only the designation "King of Egypt."*

The Sudan, however, was ever uppermost in the minds of Britain's diplomats. Even though Britain held Egypt in her grip as firmly as ever, she knew that the time would come when that paradoxical situation would need a clear-cut clarification. For that crisis Britain wanted to be prepared. As part of her preparation, Britain planned to keep the Sudan apart from Egypt, and under British control.

The long awaited chance to deal with the Sudan issue presented itself in 1924. The "Sir-dar," or Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Egypt and Governor General of the Sudan, Sir Lee Stack, was assassinated in Cairo. Britain lost no time in capitalizing the incident. She demanded, among other usual compensations and apologies—"the withdrawal from the Sudan within 24 hours of the Egyptian officers and purely Egyptian units of the Egyptian army."



*The British resorted to force, when the Egyptian Cabinet rejected the ultimatum, which flagrantly violated the 1899 Agreements and other accords. The British occupied the Alexandria Customs and by this move controlled the economic strength of Egypt.*

Once more, Egypt was forced to bow to British might. Thus, Britain was again assured of her control of the Nile Valley. Egypt's independence was a mere illusion—from Alexandria to Khartoum, the British reigned supreme.

Still Egyptians did not give up their struggle. Again negotiations were started with Britain, who, while protesting her good will, did not deviate from her position on the key issue—the Sudan.

The 1936 Treaty apparently consolidated Egypt's independence. But in fact, by that pact Egypt's occupation by British troops was prolonged for twenty more years and the Sudan question was left in abeyance.

*The following statement from the book "The Egyptian Enigma" by J. E. Marshall, illustrates Britain's view on the question:*

*"With regard to the Sudan, it may be said that the Sudan is Egypt and Egypt the Sudan. The one complements the other and they both must be under one control, and that control in the interest of the world's peace, must be British."*



Thirty-five years ago Britain announced her intention of "preparing Egypt for self-rule." To-day she is still bargaining on evacuation of her troops. British soldiers have moved out of Cairo and Alexandria, but they still occupy the Suez Canal Zone.

The 1936 Treaty provided for its revision after ten years, that is in 1946.

Throughout the long negotiations for this revision, Egypt made clear that she desired a definite and permanent solution of the Sudan question.

Egypt added that she wanted British recognition of her right to unity with the Sudan.

This right, consistently fought by Great Britain, is undeniable in the face of historical,

geographical, economic, religious and cultural ties which have linked Egypt with the Sudan for centuries.

The negotiations dragged on since 1946 and failed when the British persisted in their policy of occupation and control of the Sudan, on the outworn 1899 basis. Britain gave as her ostensible reason for wanting to stay there that her present colonial-type rule could best help prepare the Sudanese for self-government.

On the fifteenth of October 1951 the Egyptian parliament passed a bill providing for the establishment of a democratic Sudanese government and a freely elected Sudanese parliament, thus terminating the so-called *condominium* of the Sudan, freeing its inhabitants from foreign domination, and giving them the opportunity to unite with Egypt in a federal government that undertakes only defense, currency and foreign policy matters. Egypt has not the slightest desire to "colonize" the Sudan. She wants the Sudanese people to enjoy their full freedom. No such freedom will be possible as long as the British persist in remaining in the Nile Valley.

*Historians discern a parallel between an incident in early American events and the present dispute between Egypt and Great Britain. In the year 1844, when the Republic of Texas, after eight years of independent life, was attempting to find entry into the Union of the United States, the British were against it. Their Minister to Texas offered every inducement, and pointed out that Texas cotton would be welcome to the Manchester mills. The attempt to sway the political fortunes of the southwestern republic, peopled as it was by pioneers of American blood and American instincts, failed, and Texas came into the Union on December 29, 1845.*

*Today, it is pointed out, Great Britain seeks new areas to furnish her manufacturing economy with the cheap cotton she so sorely needs. Here, it may be said, is precisely her interest in the wide and fertile prairies of the Sudan.*



## IV

# THE SUDAN UNDER THE BRITISH

Under the guise of "protection," British policy in the Sudan seeks to divide the people there.

In fifty years of almost exclusive British administration, education of the Sudanese has not been marked by the progress one would expect in this modern age. Illiteracy is as high as 95%. Industry is non-existent, agriculture backward.

As far as education is concerned, the main object of the Sudan Government was to give the Sudanese such scanty instruction as would keep them in a dependent situation and at most entitle them to become office clerks or minor officials.

This was the same policy they followed in Egypt, as can be seen from the following figures: The number of pupils attending schools in 1882, the year of the British invasion was 162,237.

After thirty eight years of British occupation in 1920, the number was only 298,027. But after twenty eight years of Egyptian administration (1922 to 1950) the number skyrocketed to well over a million and a half.

On the other hand, the British authorities, through propaganda and other more direct methods, attempted to silence the mass of Sudanese who demand that their unity with Egypt be preserved. In the mosques the traditional weekly prayer for the legitimate Sovereign, was sup-

pressed. Severe censorship has been established to ban all newspapers—whether Egyptian or Sudanese—whose opinion or information is not agreeable to the British administration of the Sudan.

Great Britain's policy of segregation has assumed several other aspects: raising obstacles of a practical nature to Egyptian immigration which theoretically remains unrestricted; keeping communications between Egypt and the Sudan in a primitive condition; denying Egyptians the post of Grand Cadi, a religious function which symbolizes the spiritual bond between the Egyptian and Sudanese people; denying the Egyptian officials agreed upon in the 1936 Treaty the right of entry into the Sudan; gradually waiving Egyptians from the Sudan administration; hindering the cultural relations between Egypt and the Sudan and opposing in one way or other Egypt's efforts in the field of public health; attempting to create a separate Sudanese nationality; issuing official statements to encourage the Sudanese to secede from Egypt.



On similar lines, the British have their plans to sever the Southern part of the Sudan from the Northern, a policy which was expressed in the words of the Civil Secretary to the Sudan Ad-



ministration: "Our policy aims at the establishment of an autonomous regime in the South which could be separate and independent from the North." The program was actually put into action by such measures as prohibiting free-access to the Southern provinces; preventing those Northern Sudanese, established in the South, from practicing their religion or opening schools; and forbidding intermarriage between Northern and Southern Sudanese. For political ends a special Consultative Council for the North of the Sudan has been created.

It is noteworthy that in this vast enterprise so profitable to British industry and so liberal to British Civil servants, the British Treasury supports no spare in the expenditure of the Sudan.

It is on totally different lines that the Egyptians conceive their relationship to their Sudanese fellow-countrymen. They cannot look at the matter merely as a business concern.

Even after the Egyptian troops had been forced out of the Sudan as a result of the British ultimatum of 1924, the Egyptian Government have maintained their financial contribution to the expenditure for the defence of the Sudan. In the same way, the Egyptian Treasury had previously covered all deficits in the Sudanese budget, besides advancing the loans necessary for the development of the Sudan.

In our country, we make no difference between an Egyptian and a Sudanese. A Sudanese can aspire to any of the highest functions of the State, and Egypt has had Under-Secretaries of State, distinguished civil servants and officers of high military rank who were of Sudanese origin. Hundreds of Sudanese can be found in the Egyptian Government's service, while the number of Egyptians in the Sudanese Government is very small. Between 193 and 1941, for example, out of a total number of 123 officials newly appointed, only 11 are Egyptians, the others being British.

Whenever Sudanese students reach an outstanding degree of culture in Egyptian universities, they are sent abroad by the Ministry of Education to complete their research work in

Universities abroad on the same footing as their Egyptian colleagues. It is very significant that the Sudan British administration has only last month protested against this.

A study of the natural factors clearly demonstrates the close interdependence of the two parts of the Nile Valley and emphasizes the necessity of coordinating the efforts directing the national economy of each in order to ensure the welfare of all its inhabitants. And, the Sudan being the less advanced of the two, will undoubtedly benefit more by those closer relations.

It must be noted that the Sudan is sparsely populated, while Egypt is over-populated. Should the present obstacles preventing the economic cooperation between the two sections of the Nile Valley be removed, the Egyptian farmer, whose ingenuity and frugality are world-renowned, would be able to obviate in a considerable degree the existing deficiency in experienced farm labour in the Sudan.

And so far as the Sudanese go, Egypt is willing for them to choose their own future, unhindered and untrammelled.

The Bill passed on October 15th this year provided for a special independent Sudanese government and parliament united with the Egyptian government, has been welcomed by the Sudanese Delegation, the representative party of the majority of the Sudanese.

The Sudanese delegation has endorsed the new proposed self-government of the Sudan and its unity with Egypt, under an arrangement similar to the federal government of the United States of America. They—on the other hand—have persistently boycotted the British colonial type councils created by the British Governor of the Sudan.

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*The cry of the people of the Nile Valley is for independence from the British. This cry is for unity.*

Now, both the army of occupation and the British administration must go. This is the gist of the Egyptian point of view.



# WHAT NILE VALLEY UNITY MEANS

A cursory glance at the map will show that Egypt and the Sudan are one. Both exist on the bounty of a single life-giving blood-stream—the Nile!

The Nile compares with the Mississippi and the Amazon as one of the great rivers of the world. Five-sixths of the Nile are in the territory of Egypt and the Sudan. It flows over a distance of 4,100 miles. It runs for 1,000 miles before reaching the Sudan. Then for 2,100 miles it traverses the Sudan. Finally, it crosses 940 miles of Egypt proper to find its haven in the Mediterranean.

The immense basin of the Nile—the Sudan alone, with an area of 1,000,000 square miles, is larger than the whole of the United States east of the Mississippi—is but a single unit. Each of its two great parts—Egypt and the Sudan—is indissolubly bound with the other.

Egypt cannot exist without the Sudan. The Sudan cannot exist without Egypt.

## *Nile Unity in History*

The monuments of Egypt have resisted the ravages of time for more than 5,000 years to give clear evidence of the close union between Egypt and the Sudan in former times.

Even in the days of the Pharaohs, the heart of Africa was explored and Egyptian authority was extended over the entire southern part of the Nile Valley. Recent archaeological discoveries confirm that Egyptian civilization and culture and religion flourished in the southern part of the Sudan.

Neither in the Ptolemaic nor in the Roman era was this unity interrupted. When the Arabs came to Egypt, a great migration into the Sudan followed, the Arabs intermarrying with the indigenous population. In the sixteenth century, the Turks took possession of Egypt and the Sudan.

In the nineteenth century, Mohammed Aly founder of Egypt's reigning dynasty, established order throughout the Sudan. Until 1882, there was no dispute of the Khedive's authority.

## *Nile Unity in Culture*

From Egypt, successive waves of migrants have penetrated the reaches of the Sudan. No color bar has stood in the way of the integration of the two peoples.

Not only has Egyptian culture spread into the Sudan. Arabic is the common language of both Egyptians and Sudanese. It is the only language which can serve as the *lingua franca* of the Nile Valley.

## *Nile Unity in Economic Interests*

The economy of both Egypt and the Sudan is based largely on agriculture. The industrialization which has come about in Egypt finds no counterpart in the Sudan. On the whole, the economy of each region complements that of the other.

Both parts of the Nile Valley depend upon the planned use of Nile waters, and on the store of



water during the flood season. The extension of arable areas requires the further reclamation of the desert in the interests of both. A perennial system of irrigation in Egypt intensifies the necessity for construction projects to regulate the flow of the Nile. Some such projects exist today, others must be envisaged for the future. The Merowe Dam at the fourth Cataract outside the present boundaries of Egypt is now under construction by the Egyptian government, and is expected to be finished next year, 1952. It will cost Egypt \$60,000,000. Both the Sudan and Egypt will benefit greatly by it. An agreement concerning Owens Reservoir at Owens Falls in Uganda is already signed. Uganda, the Sudan and Egypt will all benefit greatly by it, Uganda by generated electricity and the Nile Valley by the water. New dams and new reservoirs will be as beneficial to the Sudan as to other parts of Egypt. *The salvage of Nile water is the common interest of all the peoples in the Nile Valley.*

More than this! Egypt lives at sufferance on the Upper Nile. In the words of Sir Scott Moncrieff, the British famous engineer, a hostile Power on the Upper Nile could "at will either parch or inundate Egypt." Writing on the same subject, Sir Reginald Portall said that "He who holds the Upper Nile, could dispose of Egypt as he likes and even destroy her."

Far from being a slogan for propaganda purposes, the Unity of the Nile is Nature's own behest.

### *Challenge to Nile Unity*

Today this natural and historical unity of Egypt and the Sudan is seriously challenged. The challenge comes from Britain. It is not only an attempt to break the bonds which unite Egypt and the Sudan. It is also a threat to the territorial integrity of the Sudan itself.

Soon after the occupation began, the British compelled the Egyptians to withdraw their troops and officials from the Sudan, and to cease all opposition to the forces of the Mahdi who had begun a local rebellion. Then after a few years the British moved to realize their preconceived designs. In 1896, Kitchener led a large Egyptian army, assisted by a small force of British occupation troops, to put down the Mahdi revolt. When the rebels were decisively defeated at Khartoum on September 2, 1898, Kitchener raised both the Egyptian and British flags. At the same time, he appealed to the Sudanese to respect the authority of the Khedive of Egypt as the legitimate Sovereign of the Sudan.

Then came the famous "Fashoda incident." When a French flag was hoisted at Fashoda, Kitchener protested that the Sudan was Egyptian territory. The French commander, Major Marchand, refused to give in if the British flag were flown, but he consented to withdraw when faced by the Egyptian flag alone. Confronted by a rival European Power, Britain backed the Nile Valley unity to the hilt.

### *Some Pertinent Facts About the Sudan*

Area: 969,600 square miles.

Population: 6,590,000.

Distance from northernmost to southernmost point: 1,650 miles.

Distance from easternmost to westernmost point: 900 miles.

The Sudan is:

26 times as large as Indiana;  
 23½ times as large as Ohio;  
 21½ times as large as Pennsylvania;  
 20 times as large as New York State;  
 17 times as large as Illinois;  
 16½ times as large as Michigan;  
 6 times as large as California;  
 and over 3½ times as large as Texas.



# SUEZ CANAL - EGYPT'S VITAL PROBLEM

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Years ago the British promised to leave Egypt when economic stability had been restored. Egypt today is a creditor country. Her credit balances in London exceed £230,000,000, or approximately \$600,000,000. There is no instability, economic or otherwise.

For obvious reasons, the British have dropped their obsolete plea that they are in Egypt to protect the interests of foreign creditors. There is a more plausible reason now—the protection of the Suez Canal.

The early experiences and lessons of World War II proved that a permanent and inadequate British garrison on the Suez Canal failed in its announced purpose of safeguarding Britain's communications and imperial lifeline. Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria and Port Said were all held by British troops, but in the first two years of the war Allied shipping through the Mediterranean was so costly that this route was practically abandoned. Shipping was diverted around the Cape of Good Hope, and the Suez Canal for the most part lay idle.

In this era of guided missiles, long-range aviation and the atom bomb, the present or future protection of the Suez Canal similarly cannot be guaranteed by a permanent garrison of several

thousand British soldiers nor, indeed, does Egypt regard this as the real reason for their presence.

She contends that they are there primarily to insure Great Britain's hold on the Nile Valley.

And for that matter, the British interest in the Suez Canal as outlined in the now obsolete 1936 Treaty is a violation of the spirit of the International Agreement effected in 1888 at Constantinople.

The Suez Canal Agreement of 1888 was based on two fundamental principles:

- 1) That the Canal is an international artery equally open to all nations in time of peace and in time of war.
- 2) That the responsibility for the defense of this vital maritime route falls principally on Egypt.

These two principles have been shaken to their very foundations by the 1936 Treaty, signed by occupied Egypt under duress. In contradiction of these two principles, Britain sought to make herself the guardian of the Canal. She wrote into the Treaty of 1936 provisions designed to treat the Canal merely as an essential means of communication between the different parts of the British empire.

It is somewhat an irony of fate that the British, who fought so bitterly the original deLesseps plan for the Canal, opposed its conception and construction, and subsequently put obstacles in the way of its completion, saddling Egypt meanwhile with unconscionable financial burdens, should now emerge as the self-appointed protector and guardian of the Canal.

Under construction now is the Farouk Bypass,

a 17-mile canal which will eliminate a bottleneck for passing convoys. For the last two years the Egyptians under a sizzling sun have been pushing back the sands of the Sinai Desert to carve out this bypass.

And we must not forget that the entire Suez Canal is part and parcel of the domain of Egypt.

The concession under which it is operated reverts in toto to Egypt in November, 1969.



## VII

# THE CLIMAX - Why Egypt Had to Rid Herself of the 1936 Treaty

1. The 1936 Treaty was concluded between occupied Egypt and the occupying power, Britain. Mr. Bevin, the former British Foreign Secretary said, when the dispute between Iran and Russia was brought to the Security Council, that the British government regretted that an agreement had been imposed on Iran by force while the government of Soviet Russia occupied part of Iran. "Power" he said "has it weight in negotiation." The 1936 Treaty was concluded under duress.

2. The circumstances in which the Treaty was concluded have undergone a complete change. The Axis powers are defeated. The United Nations is established. The Treaty contradicts the Charter. A member country is now keeping her troops by force in the land of another member, and against its will.

3. The Treaty contradicts the Suez Canal Convention concluded by several nations by which the signatory powers, amongst which is Britain, are forbidden to seek any particular privilege through international agreements. According to the Convention Egypt as the proprietor of the region has been placed in charge of the defense of the neutrality of the Canal and the safety of passage through it.

### *Britain Violates the Treaty*

1. The British increased the number of forces allowed to be stationed in the Suez Canal zone;

and are still bringing more. The Treaty fixed the number at 10,400 soldiers only.

2. The British overstepped the limits set for their forces; and refused to comply with the health and customs measures required by Egyptian law.

3. They did not make any effort to carry out their obligations in the Treaty to train and prepare the Egyptian army to be ready as soon as possible. In fact they have hindered the Egyptian efforts in this direction.

4. They have pursued in the Sudan, and are pursuing—contrary to their obligations in the Treaty never to pursue a foreign policy contrary to that of Egypt—a policy aimed at separating the Sudan and Egypt, and Southern Sudan from Northern Sudan. Egypt realized the futility of negotiations. She realized that the British will go on as long as they are allowed, benefitting from the Treaty while not carrying out their obligations.

### *Negotiations Are Futile*

In 1946, one full year after the collapse of the Axis and the defeat of Japan, Egypt initiated negotiations with the United Kingdom for the mutual revision of the 1936 Treaty. A project for the Treaty was arrived at and initialled by the two parties according to which Britain agreed to withdraw its troops from Egyptian territory within eighteen months from the formal ratification of the Treaty. The evacuation, there-

fore, was expected to be effected in 1949. Egypt was to take over the Suez bases two years ago.

This was the 62nd promise of evacuation since 1882, and England with repeated diplomatic procrastination on any definite settlement rejected this initialled draft Treaty. Again no agreement was reached.

In 1947, Egypt presented its case to the Security Council and after six weeks of debate the Security Council called upon the two parties to solve their differences by negotiation. Since that date, Egypt has tried in vain to come to an agreement with Great Britain.

In 1950 the present Egyptian Foreign Minister negotiated in London with the British for two months with no result whatsoever. The negotiations continued for another 15 months in Cairo without solving the issue.

At length, realizing the futility of securing British cooperation in the revision of this Treaty, Egypt has been forced to take measures for the safeguarding of her national interests.

*She was forced to abrogate this Treaty to fight openly the British colonialism which the Americans fought in 1776.*



# NAHAS PASHA SUMS UP EGYPT'S CASE Speaks in Cairo October 8, 1951

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*The Egyptian Prime Minister H. E. Mustafa el-Nahas Pasha addressed on October 8, 1951, both houses of Parliament in Cairo. In his address the Prime Minister gave a comprehensive review of Anglo-Egyptian relations. He called for the cancellation of the 1936 Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain and the two Agreements of 1889 concerning the Sudan.*

*Nahas Pasha introduced bills to this effect which were unanimously approved on October 15th.*

*Following is the text of his speech of October 8th:*

Honorable Members:

When Egypt and Great Britain concluded the Treaty of Alliance on August 26th, 1936, the danger of a Second World War was approaching very fast and the conflict between the Axis Powers on the one hand and Great Britain and her Allies on the other was becoming graver and graver. Fascist Italy had its covetous eye on the Continent of Africa and was encircling Egypt and the Sudan both on the western frontiers of Egypt and on the southeastern frontiers of Sudan. British colonists looked upon our independence and sovereignty with great misgiv-

ings. They assumed for themselves the responsibility of the protection of foreigners. They imposed their authority on our internal, international and financial affairs. This hampered the progress of the country towards complete independence and held it back from proceeding to its appropriate status among the family of nations. To give another phase of the situation in 1936, foreign capitulations were an instrument by which the financial, judiciary and administrative sovereignty of Egypt were imperilled. In themselves the capitulations reduced the country to humility and blocked every way of our national activity. Furthermore, the English had exploited the assassination of the Sirdar incident in 1924 and cut every practical relation between Egypt and the Sudan. They had evicted the Egyptian army from the Sudan and dismissed the Egyptian personnel from its administration. Finally, in 1936 the Egyptian army felt the urgent need of liberating itself from English custody. It felt the urgent need for acquiring the necessary training and preparing for the defense of the homeland.

In these circumstances and under the pressure of these factors, both material and moral, Egypt was compelled to sign the treaty of August 26th



1936. It was obliged to sign the Treaty in order to cope with the expected dangers of the Second World War, and in order to come out in the aftermath of that war as an independent nation to redeem itself from the disgrace of foreign capitulation, and in order to establish without delay the Egyptian Army. According to the obligations of the Treaty the British Government pledged to train the Egyptian Army and provide it with arms and equipment so that it might replace in the shortest period possible the limited number of British forces allowed by the Treaty to be stationed in the Suez Canal Zone. Thus Egypt intended to deliver itself eventually from every vestige of the British Occupation.

In September 1939 the imminent danger materialized, and Egypt provided Great Britain and her Allies with the greatest services and the most profitable assistance. She shared with them the most dire sacrifices and her assistance had a far-reaching influence towards winning the War. To this have testified several such great personalities of Britain itself, military and civil, as Lord Alexander, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Eden and the late Mr. Bevin.

#### *New Set of Circumstances*

The final victory of the United Nations in that war gave an utterly new turn to the circumstances in which the 1936 Treaty had been contracted. The Axis Powers, against whom the Treaty had been intended, were completely beaten and their military forces were irrecoverably wiped out; and with their defeat vanished the danger that had shown itself in 1936. On the other hand, the victors considered themselves as one united block. They joined in establishing a comprehensive system through which international relations were to be organized. Thus, not only has the threat of war against Egypt become non-existent from the side of the Axis Powers, but any threat of war from any other side has become non-existent too.

The Charter of the United Nations contracted in San Francisco in June 1945 was created to carry out these objectives. In the question of international transactions, the Charter is based on principles quite different from those on which the 1936 Treaty was negotiated. The Charter of the United Nations bans war as an implement for settling international disputes; it sets up the machinery of peace through which such disputes

should be decided. The Charter forbids that nations encroach on the independence of other nations or question the unity of their territories. It asserts the right of nations in self-determination and provides within its texts for the equality of sovereignty among member states. Furthermore, according to the United Nations Charter, if other inter-state agreements run counter to the obligations devolving from the Charter, the latter will have to be adhered to and not the former.

#### *Discussions Ended in Failure*

In view of all that, and in view of the fact that the Egyptian Nation has stood united in regard to the immediate evacuation of British troops from Egypt and the Sudan and for the unification of these two parts of our homeland the Egyptian Government negotiated with the Government of Britain with an idea of revising the Treaty of 1936 and superseding it with a treaty that might be appropriate to the new international outlook. These negotiations started at the beginning of April 1946 and terminated at the end of October of the same year, and the outcome was a draft treaty initialled by Sidky and Bevin. The two parties, however, differed as to the interpretation of the Sudan Protocol annexed to that draft treaty and the agreement did not materialize. The public opinion in Egypt unanimously rejected the agreement as it did not satisfy national aspirations.

On July 8th, 1947 the Egyptian Government brought the dispute between Egypt and Great Britain before the Security Council. Egypt pressed for the immediate and complete evacuation of the British forces from Egypt and the Sudan, and for the termination of the administrative system of government of the Sudan. The Security Council discussed the questions in eleven sessions from August 5th to September 10th, 1947, but it was unable to issue definite decisions since no motion for the settlement of the question gained the required majority. Both parties were called upon, through everyone of the motions presented, to resume direct negotiations with a view to reaching a mutual agreement. The Chairman decided to retain the dispute on the agenda of the Council, and no further step was taken by the Council beyond that stage.

After this, the Egyptian Government exchanged with the Administration of the Sudan on the one



hand and with the British Government on the other, prolonged correspondence regarding the administrative and legislative reforms in the Sudan. Conversations in this connection were held from May 6th to 28th, 1948, between the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the British Ambassador to Egypt. Both correspondence and conversations terminated in utter failure, and the two parties did not come to any agreement even though the scope of conversation was limited and the discussions did not include the unification of Egypt and the Sudan.

### *Egypt Repeated Aspirations*

In January 1950 elections were held in Egypt and the present government was voted into power. During the elections the Egyptian nation voiced again its unanimous demand for the realization of its national aspirations. The Government, in the Speech from the Throne, commended that unparalleled unanimity in the following words:

"The Nation has been unanimous to a man regarding the deliverance of our Valley—Egypt and the Sudan—from the shackles that might restrict its freedom and independence, so that it may regain its prestige and proceed to its appropriate status in international life. My Government will make the most determined efforts to accomplish the evacuation (of the British troops) from the two parts of the Valley and to safeguard its unity under the Egyptian Crown against any misuse or encroachment."

The Government then proceeded to carry out its pledges. Its first step was to try to reach an agreement with the English. We engaged in a long series of conversations which lagged for months; we tried in every possible way to convince the English of the rights of this country; we based our suggestions on realistic solutions but all our efforts were in vain. On November 16th, 1950, the Egyptian Government felt that in the honorable carrying out of its pledges it could do nothing else than to announce its intention of cancelling the 1936 Treaty together with the two agreements of January 19th and July 10th, 1899, regarding the joint administration of the Sudan.

The conversations between the two parties, however, went on. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs proceeded to London for direct talks with the British Secretary of the Foreign Office.

These talks terminated on December 15th, 1950, in a decision taken by the British Secretary to the effect that he would submit to the British Cabinet, a plan embodying new practical measures to be taken in order to solve the question of defence. He said he hoped to be able to report the reaction of his Government by mid-January 1951, or shortly after. The promised suggestions were received by the Egyptian Government as late as April 11th, 1951—three months after their fixed time, and then they were very far from satisfying our national demands.

On April 24th, 1951, the Egyptian Government refused these suggestions, both as a whole and in detail. We sent back counter-suggestions regarding evacuation and the unity of Egypt and the Sudan.

The British Government made a reply to our counter-suggestions only on June 8th, 1951.

While these conversations were lagging, the British Foreign Secretary delivered his address in the House of Commons on July 30th, 1951. In his address he announced that the British Government was still clinging to occupation and the idea of the joint defence in peace under the pretext of international necessity. He also asserted that the British Government objected to the unification of Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown, giving as an excuse that the will of the Sudanese had to be first consulted.

### *Based on Old Principles*

This announcement was an indication that there is an unbridgeable gap between the two parties. The British Government still bases its policy on the antiquated principles of colonization and empire that were so unsuccessful in America, in India and Iran. It still assumes responsibilities that are not its own and resists national rights with various excuses and pretexts.

In answer to the British Secretary's address, the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs made an announcement on August 6th, 1951, before the two Houses of Parliament to the effect that the British Foreign Secretary had with his address, closed the door of conversations. But the British Foreign Secretary sent me, on August 17th, 1951, a personal message denying that he had ever closed the door and that on the contrary he was investigating a new plan on the matter of defence. In my answer to him I enumerated



the reasons why we considered that he had brought the conversations to a close, and I added that the evacuation of British Forces from Egypt is only one part of the Egyptian Question, the other part being the unity of Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian Crown. These two parts of the question, I said, are one and indivisible. I also stated that what he had said about the Sudan would be sufficient reason why the conversations should cease. I regretted that his personal message to me did not alter the situation, yet I told him that nothing would please me more than these suggestions if they were received in time, and if the Egyptian Government found therein practical evidence that Egypt's national rights would be respected. In that case the Egyptian Government would be ready to reconsider its attitude.

#### *Warning on Abrogation Given*

My answer was sent on August 26th, 1951, and I received another personal message from the British Foreign Secretary on September 21st, 1951, to the effect that he was unable to fix a date on which he could send his suggestion concerning the matter of defence and the Sudan. Upon receiving the message I asked H. E., the British Ambassador in Cairo, to transmit to the British Foreign Secretary that the Egyptian Government was bound to announce its plans to Parliament before the end of the current recess at the beginning of October.

#### *Honorable Deputies:*

This is the history of the political conversations between the two countries. Needless to say England loses nothing by delaying and deferring these issues: The British occupation is existent in the Suez Canal Zone and the British rule under the guise of the Condominium is carrying out its disintegrating effects in the Sudan. As to Egypt, it has become impossible for her to continue longer an impossible situation. These conversations have lagged for 16 months. They have been only one feature of a long series of endeavors carried out by Egypt since the end of World War II to convince Great Britain that she should respect Egypt's national rights and cease encroaching on them with her efforts of colonizing supremacy.

Therefore, I find it incumbent on myself, now that the current Parliamentary session has ex-

tended to eleven months and has almost overlapped the next one, to announce before your Honorable House that the Egyptian Government considered that the time limit we promised Mr. Morrison in our personal message has expired, and that the conversations between the two countries have ceased in view of their futility.

#### *Offers Abrogation Decrees*

As our incessant endeavors to realize our national demands through agreement have failed, it is time that your Government fulfilled the promises given in the last Speech from the Throne and to take immediately the necessary measures to cancel the Treaty of August 26th, 1936 and the two agreements of January 19th and July 10th, 1899 regarding the administration of the Sudan.

I place the royal decrees prepared for these steps in the Office of this House.

The Government intends to issue very shortly a Green Book embodying the records of the conversations and the documents related to them. It will be shown clearly through these documents that we made indefatigable endeavors to come to an agreement. We never gave up patience and we supported our demands with irrefutable evidence; but it was the British who persisted on the antiquated principles of a Colonial Empire, which in themselves form the real threat to international security and hamper the efforts for carrying out universal peace.

#### *Honorable Members:*

After stating the foregoing I need not make any comments on the bills of law I am introducing; nor need I justify their enactment. The circumstances and reasons I have just stated are grounds enough for such justification. And, yet, I should like to enlighten you more regarding this grave historical event.

The English have argued that Egypt cannot cancel the 1936 Treaty or the 1899 Covenants, but there are numerous precedents for the unilateral revocation of international treaties and agreements. The following are some examples:

1. In 1884 the United States of America cancelled the Anglo-American Treaty, concluded on April 19th, 1850, regarding the construction of a maritime canal in Central America.

2. On December 9th, 1905, France cancelled the Agreements of the Concordat contracted by her-



self and the Pope on July 15th, 1801.

3. On October 3rd, 1908, Austria and Hungary cancelled the Treaty of Berlin 1878, by annexing to her territories Bosnia and Hercegorina.

4. On October 5th, 1908, Bulgaria cancelled the Treaty of Berlin by proclaiming her own independence.

#### *France Cancelled Contract*

5. On September 9th, 1914, Turkey cancelled the system of Foreign Capitulations that had been organized through international obligations.

6. In 1919 China cancelled the 1913 and 1915 Treaties with Russia and Mongolia.

7. Between 1926 and 1928 China cancelled all the Treaties to which she had been an unequal party.

8. In 1932 France denounced the payment of her debts to the United States of America, which were contracted through agreement on April 29th, 1926.

9. In November 1933 the Irish Free State cancelled the Anglo-Irish Treaty concluded on December 5th, 1921.

10. On September 13th, 1934 Poland cancelled her international obligation regarding the protection of minorities.

11. In December 1938 the Japanese Government cancelled the Nine-Power Pact signed on February 6th, 1922, regarding the principles which had guided these powers in their dealings with China and had determined their relations to that country.

These are various examples of the precedents of the unilateral cancellation of international treaties and agreements. They differ as to cause and circumstances and the other party always argued that the cancellation was not legal, but they were cancelled in practice and the cancellation had its legal effects in all events. It may be said that most of the countries that resorted to that measure were relying on material force; and that is true. This does not apply to us in this case as we have, in revoking the 1936 Treaty, only the moral support of our own clear rights, universal justice and the sublime principles embodied in the United Nations Charter. Our case, however, is far more justifi-

able than any of the precedents cited in the foregoing. Not one of them comes near to our own case as regards the soundness of evidence, the urgency of necessity, and the force of the grounds on which we base our cancellation. These grounds can be summed up in the following:

#### *First:*

This Treaty was concluded under the influence of British occupation and the Egyptian party did not enjoy at that time necessary right of complete free choice. This is not an excuse with which we try to justify our attitude towards the Treaty, but it was a view taken by the late Mr. Bevin the former British Foreign Secretary. Mr. Bevin announced this view in the most unequivocal terms when the dispute between Russia and Iran was brought before the Security Council. He said that the British Government regretted that an agreement had been imposed on Iran by force while the Government of Soviet Russia occupied part of Iran.

#### *Power Carries the Weight*

On the same occasion Mr. Bevin said in effect, "We are powerful; we are sometimes called the Big Three; and we are undoubtedly identified with power. Power has its weight in negotiations."

Our view of this matter was adopted by the Security Council as its decision implied that the existence of foreign troops in another country's territory deprives her of free freedom of choice in negotiations.

This is then the resolution given by the Security Council and the viewpoint of the British Foreign Secretary regarding agreements concluded under the domination of foreign occupation; and it is the true judgment that should be passed on the 1936 Treaty which was concluded under the British occupation of the whole country of Egypt and not only of some of its parts, as was the case with Iran.

I find it necessary here to explain what we mean by the pressure of foreign occupation. This does not mean that anybody exercised any material coercion on us when we signed the Treaty, but we mean that there was a state of moral coercion prevailing in the country. Egypt was at the time stifled under the occupation which



dominated every phase of our life and tampered with each of our interests. Foreign capitulations had, on the other hand, their suffocating weight and we sought for an outlet. The Treaty was only the first step in this direction and it should be followed by larger steps.

Secondly:

The circumstances in which the Treaty was concluded have undergone a complete change. This we have sufficiently explained in the foregoing.

Thirdly:

The Treaty contradicts the Suez Canal Convention on the one hand and the U.N. Charter on the other. Both of these have the priority of execution and respect. The Suez Canal Convention had been concluded a long time before the Treaty by several nations with a view to creating an important international status as to the neutrality of the Canal and the complete freedom of passage to all countries. According to this Convention the signatory parties are forbidden to seek any particular privileges whether regional, commercial or otherwise, through international agreements. According to the same Convention Egypt alone, as the proprietor of the region, has been placed in charge of the defense of the neutrality of the Canal and the safety of passage through it. This has not been complied with by the Treaty. The Treaty itself is nothing but a collection of privileges gained by Britain against the independence of Egypt and its sovereignty; and Britain should have seized this opportunity of her occupation and gained for herself all these privileges, thus running counter to the text of the 1888 Convention.

#### *Many Violations by Britain*

As to the United Nations Charter, I have explained in the foregoing the points where the 1936 Treaty contradicted the Charter. I need not repeat the fact that the Charter is most important and that it should have the priority of our adherence if any treaties were repugnant to it.

Finally:

The United Kingdom herself has again and again violated the Treaty. In fact, the English

never adhere to the Treaty unless they seek some pretext to support their occupation or to dis-unite Egypt and the Sudan. The bonds and obligations they undertook according to the Treaty weigh nothing in their view. They exceed the number of forces allowed to be stationed in the Suez Canal Zone; they overstep the bounds limited for these forces; they refuse to comply with the health and customs measures required by the Egyptian laws; they stand against the training of the Egyptian Army and preparing it according to the obligations undertaken by them in the Treaty. In the Palestinian Question they took, and they are still taking, only a hostile course. This has exposed Egypt to the gravest of dangers, though, according to the Treaty, the British are bound in their foreign policy not to take an action hostile to our alliance with them. Furthermore, they have pursued the policy of separating the Sudan and Egypt, and Southern Sudan from Northern Sudan. They have been only aiming at attaining their objectives of colonial empire, by not complying with the 1936 Treaty and the 1899 Agreement at one and the same time.

Honorable Deputies:

You will realize from the foregoing that Egypt, in cancelling the 1936 Treaty, is only acting within her legal rights. The grounds we have discussed are the same for which we are also cancelling the two Agreements of 1899. These two Agreements are still less binding than the Treaty itself. They were concluded at the time when Egypt did not possess the right of entering into political treaties. Egypt was dictated to and coerced, in the matter the Conventions signed by the Egyptian Secretary for the Foreign Affairs Administration on the one hand and the British Pro-consul on the other. They are related to the administration of the Sudan, and the text does not include any time limit for the status imposed upon Egypt. The two Agreements have only created a temporary state of affairs dictated by British authority in that period; and they should be terminated by the disappearance of that authority.

#### *King of Egypt and Sudan*

It would have sufficed if our Minister of Foreign Affairs had issued a decree cancelling these Agreements. But, in view of the relation be-



tween this act and the main national case we have included it in the bill for the cancellation of the Treaty so that it may have your sanction.

By the cancellation of the Treaty and the two Agreements the status of the Sudan before the British occupation is regained; and the King of Egypt will be the King of Egypt and the Sudan.

A system of government has to be organized in order to replace the existent administrative authority in the Sudan. A bill for this system of government is submitted to you. Through this bill the Sudanese, both in the north and in the south, will enjoy complete self-rule and a true democratic constitution. You will find that an outline of the principles has been drawn and the details are left to the Sudanese themselves to set in a Constituent Assembly truly representing the Sudanese.

The constitutional basis on which the govern-

ment of the Sudan will be organized will be in perfect harmony with the natural union of Egypt and the Sudan: this ancient union was recognized by Winston Churchill himself when he stated that the two parts of the Nile Valley form a palm tree that has its roots in the Sudan and its branches in the Delta.

The time of talking has passed; and we have now to work without sound or fury. The situation demands united efforts on the part of all parties and we are determined to endure grim sacrifices to attain our just demands.

It is a divine omen that these measures will be taken under the guidance of His Majesty, King Farouk I, whose birth coincided with the birth of our revolution in 1919.

Honorable Deputies: For Egypt I concluded the Treaty in 1936 and for Egypt I am asking you now to cancel it.

EGYPTIAN INFORMATION BUREAU  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

